**Modular Writing**

Perform just-in-time research to answer the following questions comprehensively. Cite your sources.

1. *What is modular writing?*

Modular writing is a pre-cursor to single-sourcing. Content is written once, maintained in a single location, and published in various formats. For authors to successfully reuse content, the content must be similar to other content within the document. Content must have the same format, structure, style, and other usability factors for modular writing to be successful. Consistency is key to modular writing.

1. *What are the advantages of modular writing?*

Advantages of modular writing are:

1. Ensuring consistency within individual documents and across product, business, and business entity publications
2. Increasing efficiency of publication through the “write once; use as many times as needed” philosophy
3. Assists in better decision making when selecting and using software tools
4. Creates better documents by increasing consistency and reducing redundancy throughout publications
5. *What is the difference between modular writing and single sourcing?*

The differences between *modular writing* and *single sourcing* are subtle. While *single sourcing* refers to content written once and stored in one location to be published in different formats, *modular writing* refers to content written once and stored in one location to be published in different formats, but not necessarily in the same context or in the same type of publication. For example, a software manual, software online help section, and software helpline telephone script using the same information can be a type of single sourcing. An example of modular writing would be contact information that remains the same across a whole series of publications that may not necessarily be directly related. For example, bank information on mortgage applications, new accounts, or collection notices.

1. *What is DITA and how does it apply to modular writing?*

DITA is an acronym that stands for **D**arwin **I**nformation **T**yping **A**rchitecture and is an XML data model for authoring and publishing documents. By using principles of specialization and inheritance, DITA allows authors to write content without a set context so the content can be used as necessary. As DITA allows content to be marked up in an XML-language, DITA forms the foundation for modular writing to be successful. Rather than a document being written linearly, components of documents are authored as “topics” to be combined later.